

WOMONSCAPE TIMES

~A monthly publication by the Womonscape Center Inc.~



W O M O N S C A P E C E N T E R

NO-RULES BOOK GROUP (NRBG)

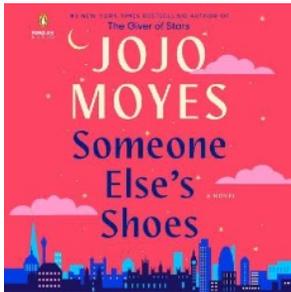
The *No Rules Book Group* (NRBG) met in May in our newly-remodeled location, complete with windows! Take a look at some of the interesting books we discussed in the space below.

Our next *No-Rules Book Group* Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, June 15 at 10:30 a.m. We'll meet at the Richland County Courthouse, near the lobby elevators, and walk to our meeting room.

MAY BOOK SELECTIONS

SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES

by Jojo Moyes



Best-selling fiction writer Moyes has really outdone herself in her latest novel. *Someone Else's Shoes* begins, quite literally, with a locker-room mix-up, in which two women at a fitness center unwittingly exchange bags, with their shoes inside.

The two women, whose outlook and status in the world are extremely different, begin to lead their lives in a whole new way, all beginning with something as simple as a mix-up of shoes.

Moyes creates not only some fascinating characters in her book, but adds a wonderful sense of humor mixed with remarkable story-telling.

THE SENTENCE

by Louise Erdrich

Ms. Erdrich centered this novel on the lives of employees and patrons of a bookstore, which just so happens to be an awful lot like her real-life bookstore in Minneapolis. The story chronicles events between November 2019 and November 2020, from the mundane concerns and inconveniences of everyday living to the urgent challenges of the Covid pandemic and the George Floyd protests. As usual, Erdrich weaves real-life events and Indigenous characters into her plot, with a cameo or two of the bookstore owner: herself!

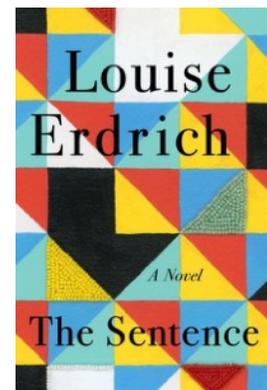


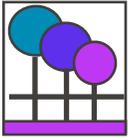
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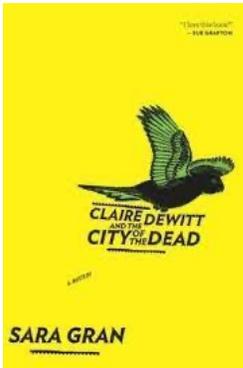
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NO-RULES BOOK GROUP

(Continued from page 1)



CLAIRE DEWITT AND THE CITY OF THE DEAD

by Sara Gran

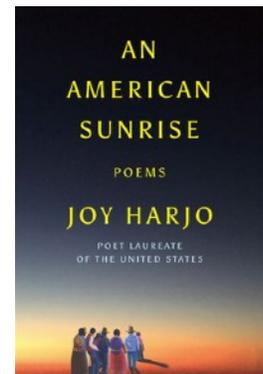
This is the first of three novels featuring detective Claire DeWitt. The story focuses on the murder of a New Orleans district attorney that occurred some time during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Mystery writer Gran does a remarkable job of creating imperfect and believable characters of different ages, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic status. Most impressively, New Orleans itself is a character in the novel, with a sense of place and history that comes from Gran's personal experiences living in this fascinating city.

AN AMERICAN SUNRISE

by Joy Harjo

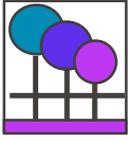
Joy Harjo is a wonderful American writer and performer who is perhaps best-known for her poetry focused on Indigenous history, celebrations, and struggles. A member of the Muskogee Creek Nation, Harjo was named the United States Poet Laureate in 2019.

This book delves into the specifics of Muskogee tribal history, including the nation's forced removal from Mississippi to Oklahoma, her mother's death, the Native Rights movement, and the quiet anger that results from living with the knowledge of generations of injustice. Below is a poem from this book.



For Earth's Grandsons

Stand tall, no matter your height, how dark your skin
 Your spirit is all colors within
 You're made of the finest woven light
 From the iridescent love that formed your mothers, fathers
 Your grandparents all the way back on the spiral road—
 There is no end to this love
 It has formed your bodies
 Feeds your bright spirits
 And no matter what happens in these times of breaking—
 No matter—you are born of those
 Who kept ceremonial embers burning in their hands
 All through the miles of relentless exile
 Those who sang the path through the massacre
 All the way to sunrise
 You will make it through—



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HAVE YOU HEARD OF THIS WOMAN?

Bernadine Strik

About six years ago, at a dinner at the *College of Agricultural Sciences* at Oregon State University, Bernadine Strik remembered being introduced as the Berry Goddess of Oregon. “And I thought, if you have a nickname, that’s a good one!”

Bernadine Strik was a berry expert at Oregon State University, helping blueberry acreage in the state grow from 1200 to 15,000 acres during her 34 year career. She also directed a fourteen-year project on organic blueberry production that helped drive an increase in Oregon organic blueberry acreage from 2% on 2006 to 20% in 2020.



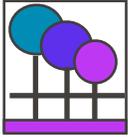
Bernadine had an international childhood. She was born in Holland, and grew up in Australia and Vancouver, British Columbia, where her parents owned and operated a large retail nursery. Bernadine went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in botany at the University of Victoria and a doctorate in horticulture at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, by the age of 25. After graduation, she became a berry specialist and professor at Oregon State University, and stayed there for the next 34 years. Although she is best known for her work with blueberries, Bernadine also developed methods for growing strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and cranberries.

Bernadine worked directly with berry growers, who respected her not only for her knowledge but for her straight-talking, good-humored approach. As one of the growers explained, “To berry growers in the Pacific Northwest, Dr. Strik, was jut Bernadine....She was the quintessential approachable scientist. Her presentations lifted us, enlightened us and helped us to learn and change. We are better growers and we are a better industry because of Bernadine Strik. “

At the Oregon State University’s *College of Agricultural Sciences*, Bernadine’s coworkers valued her support as an advisor and department cheerleader. According to Stacy Simonich, the college Dean, Bernadine “was an authentic leader who boosted others up....including myself, including her students, including the people who worked with her, research associates, she boosted everybody up.”

While studying horticulture in Canada, Bernadine met her husband, fellow horticulturalist Neil Bell. “Berries brought us together,” he said. The couple had two daughters. Bernadine was a major advocate for work-life balance. She demonstrated this by traveling the world with her family and hiking along the Pacific Northwest trails with her daughters and husband.

Bernadine died in April at the age of 60.



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HAVE YOU HEARD OF THIS WOMAN?

Dorothy West



Dorothy West was a most remarkable writer. She started writing at the age of seven, published her first story at the age of fourteen, and kept on writing until her death at the age of ninety-one. She certainly was focused!

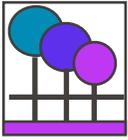
West was born into a very affluent family in Boston. Her father, Isaac West, was enslaved until the age of seven, yet by age ten he started his own business. By the time Dorothy was born, in 1907, Isaac owned his own wholesale fruit company and was known affectionately as the Black Banana King. Dorothy was able to attend prestigious private schools and spend her summers at the family's second home in Martha's Vineyard. Dorothy's mother, Rachel Benson, taught young Dorothy and her cousins how to navigate an unjust world. As Dorothy recalled, "We were always stared at. Whenever we went outside the neighborhood that knew us, we were inspected like specimens under glass. My mother prepared us. As she marched us down our front stairs, she would say what our smiles were on tiptoe to hear, 'Come on, children, let's go out and drive the white folks crazy.' She said it without rancor, and she said it in that outrageous way to make us laugh. She was easing our entry into a world that outranked and outnumbered us. If she could not help us see ourselves with the humor, however wry, that gives the heart its grace, she would never have forgiven herself for letting our spirits be crushed before we had learned to sheathe them with pride."

In the 1920s Dorothy and her cousin, Helen Johnson, moved to New York City to enroll at Columbia University. Dorothy left college after a year to pursue a career writing full-time, but she stayed in New York, becoming an important part of the Harlem Renaissance movement. She became friends with such luminary Black writers as Zora Neale Hurston, Langston Hughes, and Countee Cullen.

Like many artists, Dorothy struggled financially during the Great Depression. She tried acting for a few years, traveling to the Soviet Union with other Harlem Renaissance intellectuals, to film a movie about racism in the United States. When the project was cancelled, Dorothy stayed in the Soviet Union for a year, returning home shortly after her father's death.



(Continued on page 5)



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Dorothy West (Continued from page 4)

During the later 1930s, she used her meager finances to edit and publish two magazines focused on the work of Black artists, including Ralph Ellison and Richard Wright. Finally, she took a job at the Works Project Administration Federal Writer's Project and as a welfare investigator and WPA relief worker in Harlem to get back on track financially.

In 1947 Dorothy left New York and moved to her family's vacation home in Martha's Vineyard, where she lived for the rest of her life. She started writing novels and short stories full-time, including The Living is Easy, a book about an upper-class black family living in the south. The novel received considerable critical acclaim, but did not sell well because of reactions from white readers. Dorothy also contributed columns to a local newspaper, the *Martha's Vineyard Gazette*, where her writing gained the attention of former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, who was one of Dorothy's neighbors. Jackie learned that Dorothy had started a book called The Wedding in the 1960s, and encouraged her to finish it. At the time, Jackie was an associate editor at Doubleday, and served as the book's editor. The Wedding tells the story of a privileged mixed-race woman who marries a white jazz musician, including details about the five generations of families who attend the ceremony. The book was dedicated to Onassis, and became not only a successful novel, but a mini-series produced by Oprah Winfrey.

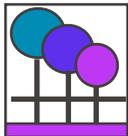
Shortly before her death in 1998, Dorothy won the *Ainsfield-Wolf Book Award for Lifetime Achievement*. She was asked what she wanted to be her legacy. She responded, "That I hung in there. That I didn't say I can't."



There is no life that does not contribute to history.

~ Dorothy West





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JUNE BIRTHDAY CHALLENGE ~

Here is a diverse list of women who had or have a June birthday. How many do you know?

- JUNE 1: MARILYN MONROE***
- JUNE 2: DOROTHY WEST***
- JUNE 3: MASAMI NAGASAKI***
- JUNE 4: MICHELLE PHILLIPS***
- JUNE 5: MARY KAY BERGMAN***
- JUNE 6: LOLA FORNER***
- JUNE 7: JESSICA TANDY***
- JUNE 8: CATHERINE MCKINNELL***
- JUNE 9: CLOË AGNEW***
- JUNE 10: HATTIE MCDANIEL***
- JUNE 11: SHERINA MUNAF***
- JUNE 12: ANNE FRANK***
- JUNE 13: ELEANOR NORTON HOLMES***
- JUNE 14: HARRIET BEECHER STOWE***
- JUNE 15: BRIGITTE FOSSEY***

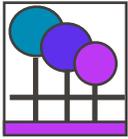
- JUNE 16: BARBARA MCCLINTOCK***
- JUNE 17: VENUS WILLIAMS***
- JUNE 18: EVA BARTOK***
- JUNE 19: AUNG SAN SUU KYI***
- JUNE 20: MARICAR REYES***
- JUNE 21: ANNE CARSON***
- JUNE 22: MERYL STREEP***
- JUNE 23: MARIJA NAUMOVA***
- JUNE 24: CANDICE PATTON***
- JUNE 25: SONIA SOTOMAYOR***
- JUNE 26: PEARL S. BUCK***
- JUNE 27: HELEN KELLER***
- JUNE 28: BELGIN DORUK***
- JUNE 29: AMANDA DONOHOE***
- JUNE 30: KATHERINE RYAN***



Can you identify these five women?

DONATIONS WELCOMED

A huge thank you to our recent donators to the Womonscape Center. Donations help us print and publish this newsletter. Because the *Womonscape Center, Inc.* is a 501(c)(3) organization, all donations are tax-deductible. They can be sent by mail to *Womonscape Center, Inc.*, PO Box 335, Richland Center WI 53581; they can also be sent online via our website: www.womonscapecenter.org.



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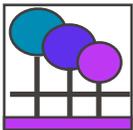
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JUNE 15— is our
next scheduled
No-Rules Book Group
in Richland Center.
See Page 1 for details.

**Womonscape
Times**

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QUOTES BY WOMEN:

Every thought, every word, and every action that adds to the positive and the wholesome is a contribution to peace. Each and every one of us is capable of making such a contribution.

~ Aung San Suu Kyi

The question has been asked, "What is a woman?" A woman is a person who makes choices. A woman is a dreamer. A woman is a planner. A woman is a maker, and a molder. A woman is a person who makes choices. A woman builds bridges. A woman makes children and makes cars. A woman writes poetry and songs. A woman is a person who makes choices.

~ Eleanor Holmes Norton

NOTE: All these women are included in the June Birthday list on page 6.